

(e) Research and information

The plan may provide for establishing and carrying on research, consumer information, and industry information projects and studies to the end that the marketing and utilization of pecans may be encouraged, expanded, improved, or made more efficient, and for the disbursement of necessary funds for such purposes.

(f) Reserve funds

The plan may provide authority to accumulate reserve funds from assessments collected pursuant to this chapter, to permit an effective and continuous coordinated program of research, consumer information, industry information and promotion in years when the production and assessment income may be reduced, except that the total reserve fund may not exceed the amount budgeted for the operation of the plan for 2 years.

(g) Foreign markets

The plan may provide authority to use funds collected under this chapter, with the approval of the Secretary, for the development and expansion of pecan sales in foreign markets.

(Pub. L. 101-624, title XIX, §1911, Nov. 28, 1990, 104 Stat. 3847.)

§ 6007. Assessments**(a) In general**

During the effective period of a plan issued pursuant to this chapter, assessments shall be—

- (1) levied on all pecans produced in, and all pecans imported into, the United States and marketed; and
- (2) deducted from the payment made to a grower for all pecans sold to a first handler.

(b) Limitation on assessments

No more than one assessment may be assessed under subsection (a) of this section on a grower (as remitted by a first handler), grower-sheller, or importer, for any lot of pecans handled or imported.

(c) Remitting assessments**(1) In general**

Assessments required under subsection (a) of this section shall be remitted to the Board by—

- (A) a first handler; and
- (B) an importer.

(2) Times to remit assessment**(A) First handlers**

Each first handler who is not a grower-sheller and who is required to remit an assessment under paragraph (1) shall remit such assessment to the Board no later than the last day of the month following the month that the pecans being assessed were purchased or marketed by such first handler.

(B) Grower-shellers

Each first handler who is a grower-sheller and who is required to remit an assessment under paragraph (1) shall remit such assessment to the Board, to the extent practicable, in payments of one-third of the total annual amount of such assessment due to

the Board on January 31, March 31, and May 10, or such dates as may be recommended by the Board and approved by the Secretary, during the fiscal year that the pecans being assessed were harvested.

(C) Importers

Importers of pecans into the United States shall pay the assessment at the time the pecans enter the United States and shall remit such assessment to the Board.

(d) Assessment rate**(1) In general**

Except as provided in paragraph (2), assessment rates shall be recommended by the Board and approved by the Secretary, except that the maximum assessment shall not exceed—

(A) during the period commencing on the effective date of the issuance of a plan and ending on the date the referendum is conducted under section 6011(a) of this title, one-half cent per pound for in-shell pecans as determined by the Board and approved by the Secretary; and

(B) after such period, 2 cents per pound for in-shell pecans.

(2) Adjusting rate for shelled pecans

The rate of assessment of shelled pecans shall be twice the rate established for in-shell pecans pursuant to paragraph (1).

(3) Special State assessment**(A) In general**

Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, with the approval of the Secretary and if authorized by State law and requested by such State, a special assessment of one-quarter cent per pound for in-shell pecans, and an appropriate per-pound assessment for shelled pecans as adjusted under paragraph (2), shall be remitted to the Board for the purpose of utilizing such funds by a State pecan marketing board for research projects to promote pecans pursuant to State law.

(B) Collection and remittance

The Board shall collect such assessments and upon receipt of such assessments shall remit such assessments to the State, within a time period mutually agreed upon between the State and the Board, and approved by the Secretary. In the collection of such State assessments, neither the Board nor the Secretary shall in any manner enforce the collection or remittance of any such payment by producers of such State assessments or investigate nonpayment of such State assessments, except to provide to a State the names of growers from whom such assessments were collected and the respective amounts of assessments collected.

(C) Regulations

The Secretary is authorized to make such regulations as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this section.

(e) Late-payment charge**(1) In general**

There shall be a late-payment charge imposed on any person who fails to remit, on or

before the due date established by the Board under subsection (c)(2) of this section, to the Board the total amount for which such person is liable.

(2) Amount of charge

The amount of the late-payment charge imposed under paragraph (1) shall be prescribed by the Board with the approval of the Secretary.

(f) Refund of assessments from escrow account

(1) Establishment of escrow account

During the period beginning on the effective date of a plan first issued under section 6003 of this title and ending on the date the referendum is conducted under section 6011(a) of this title, the Board shall—

(A) establish an escrow account to be used for assessment refunds; and

(B) place funds in such account in accordance with paragraph (2).

(2) Placement of funds in account

The Board shall place in such account, from assessments collected during the period referred to in paragraph (1), an amount equal to the product obtained by multiplying the total amount of assessments collected during such period by 10 percent.

(3) Right to receive refund

Subject to paragraphs (4), (5), and (6), any grower, grower-sheller, or importer shall have the right to demand and receive from the Board a one-time refund of assessments paid by or on behalf of such grower, grower-sheller, or importer during the period referred to in paragraph (1) if—

(A) such grower, grower-sheller, or importer is required to pay such assessments;

(B) such grower, grower-sheller, or importer does not support the program established under this chapter;

(C) such grower, grower-sheller, or importer demands such refund prior to the conduct of the referendum under section 6011(a) of this title; and

(D) the plan is not approved pursuant to the referendum conducted under section 6011(a) of this title.

(4) Form of demand

Such demand shall be made in accordance with regulations, on a form, and within a time period prescribed by the Board.

(5) Making of refund

Such refund shall be made on submission of proof satisfactory to the Board that such grower, grower-sheller, or importer paid the assessment for which refund is demanded.

(6) Proration

If—

(A) the amount in the escrow account required by paragraph (1) is not sufficient to refund the total amount of assessments demanded by eligible growers, grower-shellers, or importers; and

(B) the plan is not approved pursuant to the referendum conducted under section 6011(a) of this title;

the Board shall prorate the amount of such refunds among all eligible growers, grower-shellers, and importers who demand such refund.

(7) Program approved

If the plan is approved pursuant to the referendum conducted under section 6011(a) of this title, all funds in the escrow account shall be returned to the Board for use by the Board in accordance with this chapter.

(Pub. L. 101-624, title XIX, §1912, Nov. 28, 1990, 104 Stat. 3848.)

§ 6008. Petition and review

(a) Petition

(1) In general

A person subject to a plan issued under this chapter may file with the Secretary a petition—

(A) stating that the plan, any provision of the plan, or any obligation imposed in connection with the plan is not in accordance with law; and

(B) requesting a modification of the plan or an exemption from the plan.

(2) Hearings

The petitioner shall be given the opportunity for a hearing on the petition, on the record and in accordance with regulations issued by the Secretary.

(3) Ruling

After such hearing, the Secretary shall make a ruling on the petition, which shall be final if in accordance with law.

(b) Review

(1) Commencement of action

The district courts of the United States in any district in which a person who is a petitioner under subsection (a) of this section resides or carries on business are hereby vested with jurisdiction to review the ruling on such person's petition, if a complaint for that purpose is filed within 20 days after the date of the entry of a ruling by the Secretary under subsection (a) of this section.

(2) Process

Service of process in such proceedings shall be conducted in accordance with the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.

(3) Remands

If the court determines that such ruling is not in accordance with law, the court shall remand the matter to the Secretary with directions either—

(A) to make such ruling as the court shall determine to be in accordance with law; or

(B) to take such further proceedings as, in the opinion of the court, the law requires.

(4) Enforcement

The pendency of proceedings instituted under subsection (a) of this section shall not impede, hinder, or delay the Attorney General or the Secretary from taking any action under section 6009 of this title.

(Pub. L. 101-624, title XIX, §1913, Nov. 28, 1990, 104 Stat. 3850.)